

From Sochi-2014 to FIFA-2018: a fading sovereignty?

Makarychev A., Yatsyk A.

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

Abstract

© 2015 Taylor & Francis. In this article, we uncover the dynamics and the evolution of Russian discourses of sovereignty before and after the Sochi 2014 Olympic Games using some elements of Foucauldian methodology and constructivist reading of sovereignty as an institution. We argue that there is a discrepancy between the rhetoric of sovereign power and the institutional practices in which it is embedded. It leads us to theorize that sovereignty discourses are contextual, unstable and constitutively shaped by commitments taken as key elements of international socialization. In the case of Russia, these discourses can be divided into three groups: pre-Sochi, post-Sochi and pre-World 2018 Cup discursive formations. As we venture to demonstrate, Putin's model of sovereignty is in crisis, yet it has support, both domestic and international. In the near future, sport is likely to remain one of those spheres of high visibility where the ideology of surviving under sanctions and counter-attacking the West will be reified.

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